

ALLF 50
7 P66

Alberta Dept of Lands + Forests
Provincial Parks Division

CA2 ALLF 50 1967P66
Provincial Parks Policy, March 1967. 1

3 3398 00138 8650

~~FOR INTERNAL
USE ONLY~~

PROVINCIAL PARKS POLICY
MARCH 1967

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FEB 25 1967
EDMONTON

LIBRARY
VAULT 19

FOREWORD

The Provincial Parks system had its beginning on May 15, 1932 with the establishment of Aspen Beach Park.

The purpose of Provincial Parks is to provide active and passive recreation in a setting of natural beauty for the population of the province and visitors.

STATEMENT OF ALBERTA'S PARK POLICY

Under the provisions of the Department of Lands and Forests Act, the Provincial Parks Act, and other pertinent statutes, the Department is charged with the management and administration of Provincial Parks.

✓ The Provincial Parks Division of the Department of Lands and Forests is charged with all matters relating to the management and administration of parks.

For purposes of administration, a park is any area designated under the provisions of the Provincial Parks Act.

The fundamental and important obligation in the administration of parks is to preserve from impairment all significant objects and features of nature in the park while providing the opportunities for enjoyment of the park and its natural recreational activities and developments in perpetuity.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIVISION

Establish need of population present and future for park recreational activities.

Assess the recreational resource potential of locations.

Recommend reservations or acquisition of suitable park land.

Establish, develop and manage parks to meet needs of the

population while ensuring that impairment of physical features does not destroy those features for future generations.

ADMINISTER PARKS OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES

PARK - A tract of land offering a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities and containing areas of natural scenic beauty or historical significance. To provide recreational facilities in harmony with the preservation of significant geographical, geological, biological or historic features; but always so as to minimize impairment.

RECREATIONAL AREAS - A tract of land offering recreation opportunities which do not require the degree of protection sought by park status or having development standards which may be less exacting than those of a park. To provide for popular outdoor recreation on intensively developed lands.

HISTORICAL SITES - A site which has local or provincial importance for its cultural association such as old fortifications, petroglyphs and pictographs, Indian archeological sites, etc. The purpose would be to preserve portions of the country's cultural heritage for interpretation and display in an appropriate manner and for scientific research.

NATURAL AREAS - A tract of land containing an ecological association which is desired to identify and preserve intact for its scientific or interpretive recreational interest or a unique natural area of outstanding scenic quality or a natural feature of special interest such as river canyon, spectacular water fall, superb forest, unique geological feature, etc. The purpose would be to preserve the area or feature in the natural state for

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Alberta Legislature Library

viewing and interpretation in an appropriate manner.

WILDERNESS AREA - A tract of undeveloped land set aside for the presentation of a natural environment, retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation. The purpose is to provide opportunities to expand outdoor knowledge and recreation experience in natural wild conditions.

ROADSIDE CAMPSITES - A tract of non-urban land adjacent to travelled routes providing camping and rest stops for the travelling public. Not included are highway campsites operated by the Department of Highways.

Activities in parks should relate to an appreciation of nature and our heritage. For these purposes, the following guidelines for park use are appropriate:

- (1) Picnicking
- (2) Swimming, boating and fishing
- (3) Camping
- (4) Hiking, sightseeing, photography
- (5) Nature appreciation
- (6) Winter recreation

WILDLIFE AND NATURE

- (1) Objects of nature in parks are important parts of the provincial heritage and should be preserved unimpaired for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations.
- (2) The flora, fauna, soils and waters form the natural ecological communities in parks. To limit fire, to maintain healthy forests and other vegetative cover, to control erosion and to preserve recreational and aesthetic values

may require the management of any or all components of such communities. Such management must be planned by qualified personnel in order to maintain aesthetic values of, at least, a quasi-natural environment.

- (3) The quality of beauty and wildlife in parks must be maintained in a completely natural situation. Modern hunting methods tend to reverse the process of natural selection by favouring survival of the less fit. For this reason parks, excluding Wilderness Areas, must be retained as game preserves. If game populations exceed the carrying capacities of the range then numbers should be reduced under the direction of park staff..
- (4) Park planning shall give full consideration to character, size, shape and location of parks in order to provide for:
 - (i) year-round ecological requirements for the indigenous animal species especially those with migratory habits, and
 - (ii) preservation of representative and unique geological formations and other natural history objects.
- (5) The following activities are detrimental to natural history values in a park:
 - (i) Grazing of domestic livestock,
 - (ii) Pollution of air, soil or water,
 - (iii) The mining or harvesting of the resources of land or water including oil exploration and drilling.
 - (iv) Granting of easements across park land for commercial purposes such as oil wells, pipelines, power lines, etc.

The only grounds on which any of the foregoing activities can be accepted in a park is if they are of sufficient

importance that the sacrifice of park values can be justified.

- (6) The construction of highways, fire roads, hiking trails, fences, townsites, artificial recreational developments and the like are detrimental to natural history values in parks, but, if essential should be developed so as to have the least possible impact on nature and natural features.
- (7) Impairment to nature in general, caused by visitor use or developments aimed at improving visitor use of a park, should be kept to an absolute minimum. Any such impairment should be accepted only if it is justified by increased, improved or broadened use of the park in accordance with park purposes.
- (8) The character of special features of a park should not be altered. Artificial developments required to assist the visitor to enjoy the feature should be located or effected so as not to interfere with its natural appearance or character. This would exclude the alteration of a feature so that, in effect, the alteration itself becomes the thing of interest.
- (9) Conflicts between wildlife and other park interests should be resolved if possible without destruction of wildlife.
- (10) Good quality angling for visitor recreation should be encouraged and maintained through modern methods of habitat management and fish culture, based on scientific recommendations.
- (11) Scientific research should be considered an integral part of park purposes where,
 - (i) data is required to establish appropriate public activities and sound management of the natural features,

- (ii) the areas concerned offer suitable locations for study of ecological problems and where such study is in harmony with parks policy,
- (iii) the research is being undertaken or sponsored by an accredited scientific organization.

Notwithstanding (ii) and (iii) above, no research, other than for park purposes, should be carried on in a park if suitable areas for its conduct can be found elsewhere.

- (12) Public appreciation of natural history values must be developed through provision of nature trails, nature museums, nature guides, leaflets, lectures and other interpretative activities. Data essential to such interpretative programs should be developed by well planned research.

FORESTRY

- (13) The forests of the parks should be protected and maintained to preserve their natural recreational, scenic and other aesthetic values, and any use made of them should leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.
- (14) No single detailed forest policy is applicable to all of the park forests. The type of management depends upon the most desirable use of the area. A wilderness zone should contain a completely natural forest. An area around a townsite or campground should be managed so as to maintain a forest that will withstand the necessary visitor use without altering the natural scene appreciably.
- (15) Only forest operations which are primarily concerned with the management of the forests for the protection and maintenance of park values should be permitted. Forest

operations whose sole or main object is the cutting and removal of timber products for their commercial value alone should not be permitted.

(16) Permissible forest operations include those whose primary aim is:

- (i) The removal of dead, diseased or infested timber whose presence threatens the health of adjacent forest, constitutes a real fire or visitor safety hazard, or seriously reduces the recreational, scenic or other aesthetic values of an area used extensively by park visitors.
- (ii) Artificial reforestation of areas where a forest is desirable and natural regeneration of former or existing stands is not occurring naturally. Natural meadows or barrens should not be planted with trees. Only species native to the area should be used for reforestation or similar plantings. Planting of exotic trees and shrubs should be limited to ornamental or landscape use in built up areas or recreational areas.
- (iii) Cultural cutting of green timber to develop or maintain healthy recreational forests in areas where public use makes such forests desirable to satisfy park purposes. This type of management is acceptable in and around developed areas, along scenic drives and in areas where there is a risk of losing a high proportion of the forest cover at one time.



ACCESS TO PARKS

COMMERCIAL HIGHWAYS

Trunk highways passing through a park and designed for through or commercial traffic represent an intrusion.

- (1) The only grounds on which a trunk highway for through or commercial traffic can be accepted in a park is if it is of sufficient importance that the sacrifice of park values can be justified.

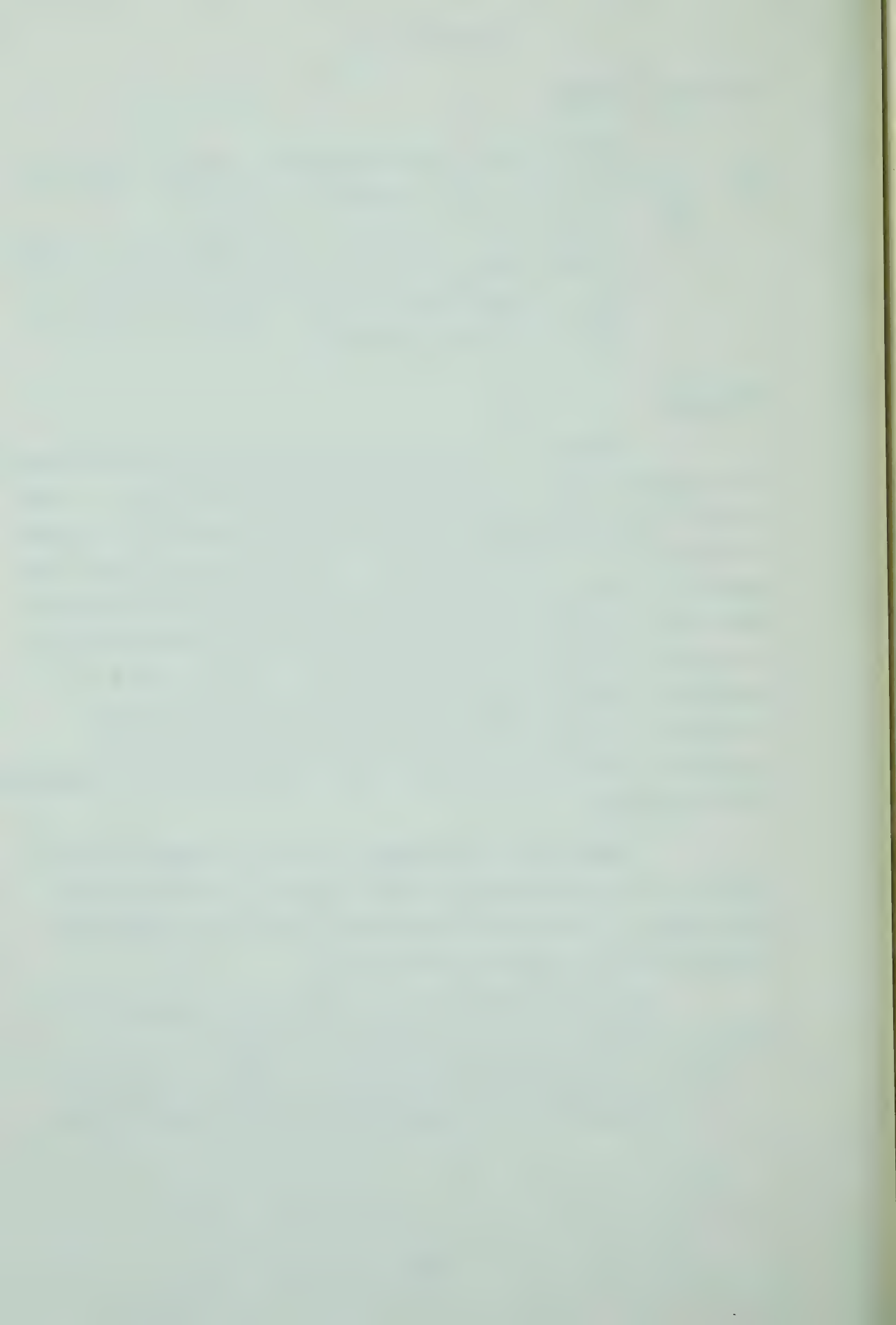
PARK ROADS

A system of roads within a park, although an impairment, is necessary to allow visitors access to the park features so that they can enjoy and benefit from them. This impairment is accepted on the basis that the increased use and enjoyment of the park made possible by the construction of a road outweighs the reduction in park values caused by the impairment. However, the roads must be located so as to reduce general impairment as much as possible. Borrow pits, spill areas and road verges must be selected and constructed in such a manner and with sufficient screening to prevent the impairment of scenic values and destruction of important natural features.

Roads should be designed to a good standard for safe driving but not a sufficiently high standard to encourage high speed travel. The mixing of high speed traffic and sightseeing traffic results in a high accident rate.

The standard of the road should be in keeping with the character of the park and the purpose of the road.

- (2) Roads are the accepted means of access to and within the parks. The design of park roads requires high



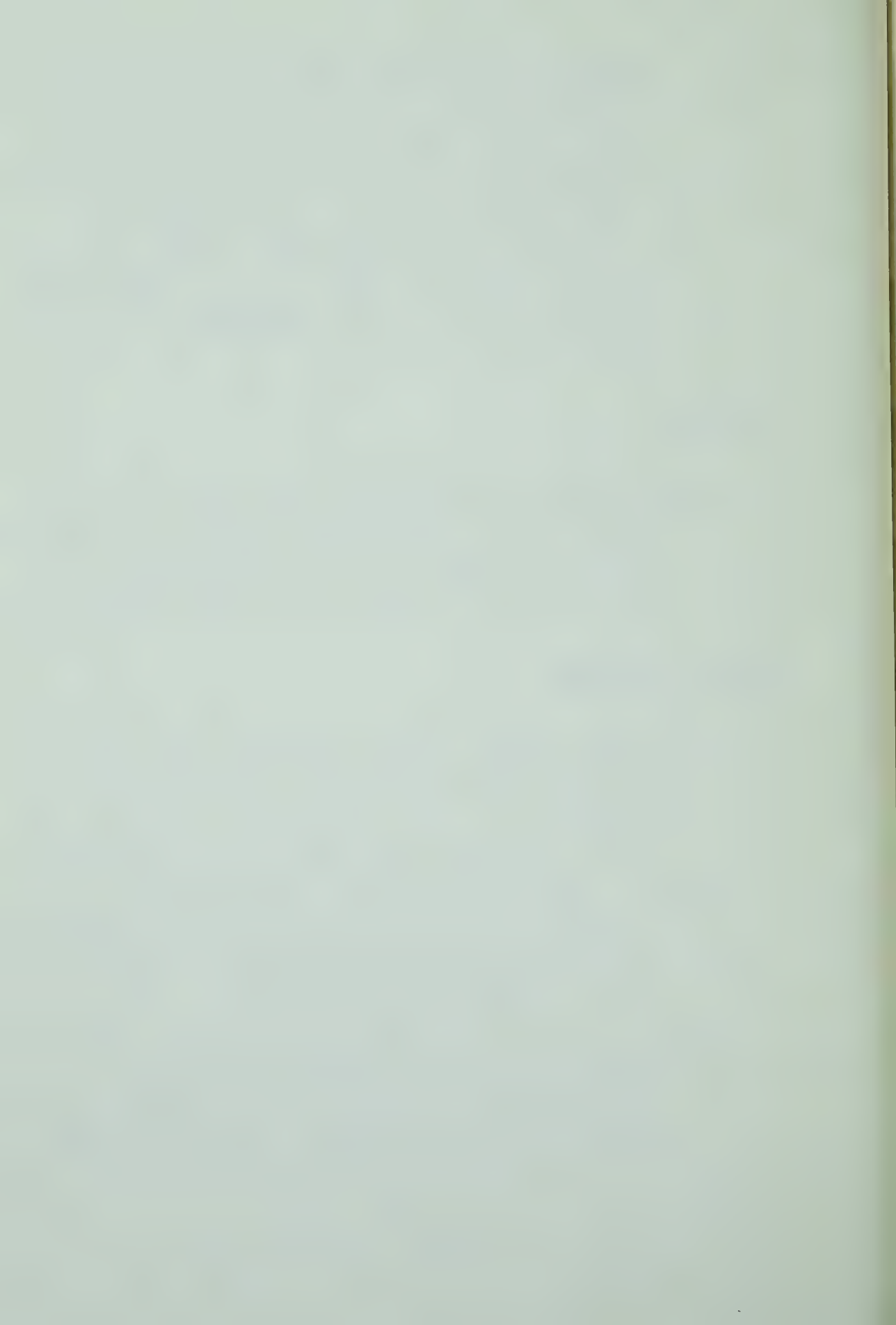
quality construction but width, grade and alignment should be adequate for moderate speeds only. Park road standards should conform to a carefully prepared classification system in which the volume of traffic, type of vehicle and desired speed of travel are considered. The location, design and construction of park roads must keep impairment of the landscape to an absolute minimum and avoid interference with special park features.

AIRFIELDS

- (3) The provision of airfields in parks should be limited to the use for transportation of visitors to or from parks where there is sufficient land available and there is a definite need for this type of transportation.

WATERWAYS AND BOATING

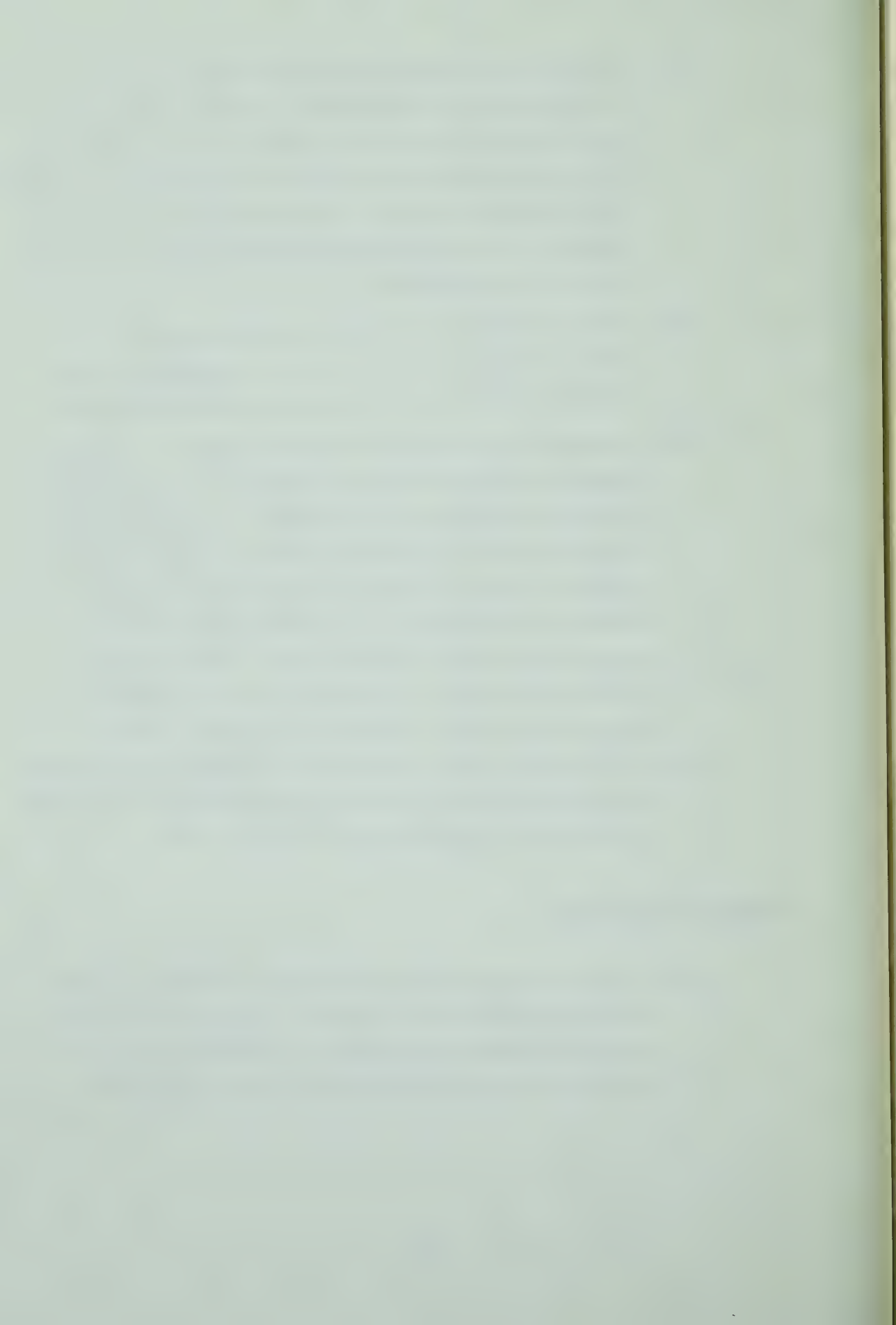
- (4) Since travel by boat is an acceptable means of park use and enjoyment and a means of access to points of interest in the parks, improvements to waterways which do not create significant impairment are justifiable.
- (5) The nature and extent of improvements should be considered in relation to the purpose of the park and the use or zoning of the particular area as described in the approved plan for the park.
- (6) Where factors such as the safety of swimmers, the limited size of a water body, or the wilderness character of an area require it, power boating may be limited or non-powered craft only may be permitted.



- (7) The provision of accommodation for boats such as launching ramps, docking and associated shore facilities such as parking areas and toilet buildings, is an acceptable form of park development where it will facilitate park purposes. Such facilities must be separate from swimming developments since the two uses are quite incompatible.
- (8) Docking, fueling and storage accommodation for commercial boat services should be designed to park standards and be built and owned by the government.
- (9) Accommodation for private boaters should be designed primarily for the small boats brought to the park by the touring visitor or vacationer. It should include launching ramps and parking space for cars and boat trailers as well as parking space for the overall boating accommodation. It should provide temporary docking facilities for day users. The department should not attempt to provide seasonal docking or storage and repair facilities for private boats.
- (10) The location, type and extent of boating accommodation and its relation to overall park development will form part of the long range plan for each park.

TRAILS AND FOOTPATHS

- (11) Travel in parks by foot should be encouraged. While the construction of trails for horses and footpaths does not appreciably impair the landscape, care should be taken to avoid impairment as much as possible.



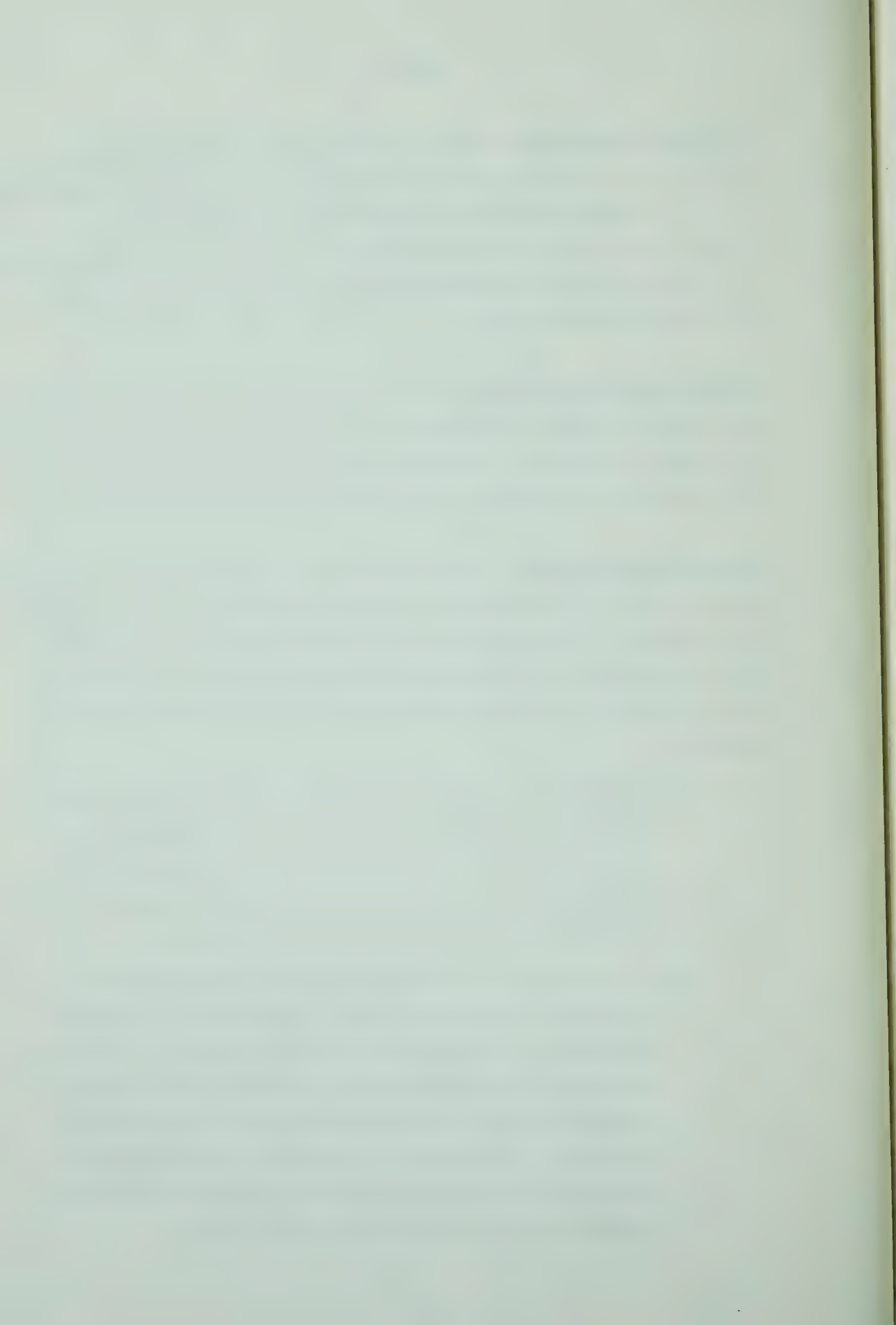
CAMPING

Serviced Campgrounds - where a formal layout is provided, but retaining tree cover as much as possible. This type of campground would be equipped with such facilities as flush toilets, electricity, heated water, shelters. It would have separate zones for tents and travel trailers with sewage, water and electrical hook-ups for the latter.

Semi-Serviced Campgrounds - the objective here would be to provide near natural camping conditions in prepared sites with only basic facilities provided. Facilities provided would be piped water, flush toilets if possible, and kitchen shelters if required.

Primitive Campgrounds - would consist of little more than designated camping spots. They would be largely protective in that camping would have to take place in areas brushed out for that purpose. Thus a haphazard pattern of camping with its usual occupancy of prime sites and resulting deterioration of those sites could be avoided.

- (1) Camping is an activity closely related to the basic purposes of a park. Facilities and regulations for camping must be carefully planned to encourage this form of park use without sacrificing the natural park values that the camper has come to enjoy.
- (2) Campgrounds with varying degrees of services are required. While the larger campgrounds with modern services are necessary at certain points to meet the demand, it is desirable to avoid undue expansion of campgrounds and provision of too many services and luxuries. As far as practicable we should provide more of the semi-serviced and primitive campgrounds rather than the large mass camping areas.



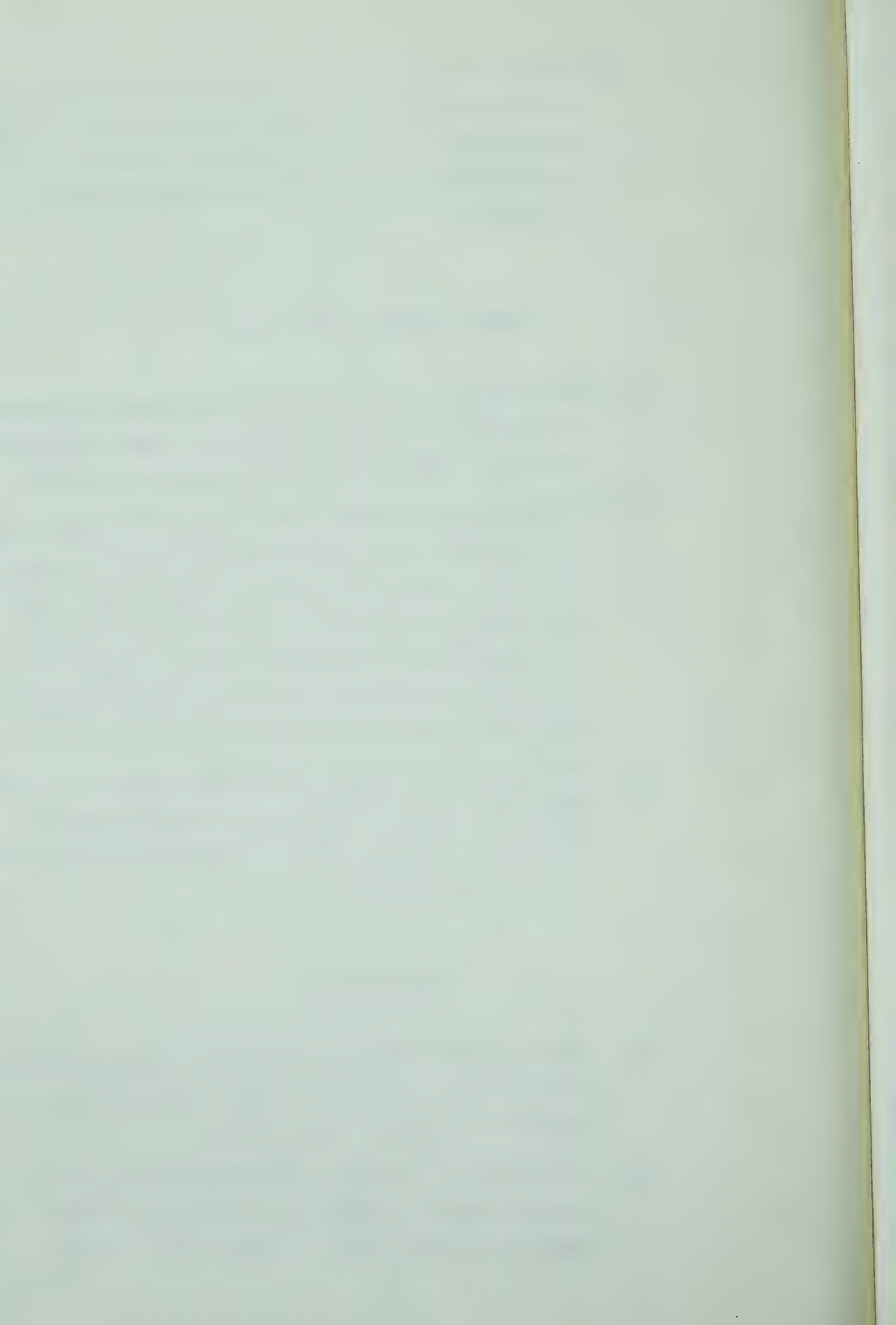
- (3) Only when a park or a particular area within a park is so small or fragile that the presence of a campground would impair the natural features that form the basic purpose for establishing the park should camping not be permitted.

GROUP CAMPING DEVELOPMENTS

- (1) The leasing of land, and the construction of permanent buildings by private organizations (youth organizations, churches, clubs, etc.) is not permitted in parks.
- (2) Group camping oriented toward the benefit, education and enjoyment to be gained from the natural attractions of a park is one of the most desirable forms of park use. Campground facilities suitable for organized group camping are desirable. Group camping areas should be specially designed, developed and maintained by the department to be made available to suitable groups.
- (3) The removal of existing establishments such as church camps and youth camps should be effected wherever possible in a manner that will inconvenience the users as little as possible.

TOWNSITES

- (1) The leasing of lands for residential purposes whether for permanent residence or summer cottage use is not compatible with other park purposes.
- (2) The removal of existing establishments should be effected wherever possible in a manner that will inconvenience the users or lessees as little as



possible when the subdivided area becomes necessary for expansion of facilities more compatible to park purposes.

RESEARCH

- (1) Scientific research for park purposes, such as management of the flora and fauna of the parks and the provision of data for park interpretation, is considered an integral part of park operations.
- (2) No research, other than for park purposes, should be carried on in a park if suitable areas for its conduct can be found elsewhere. If a suitable area cannot be found elsewhere and the information or service is of sufficient importance the program may be accepted only if its importance outweighs the resulting reduction in park values. In any case the impairment and effect on the park is to be kept to an absolute minimum.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Interpretative services and qualified naturalists are required to assist the public to know and appreciate the varied aspects of the natural scene. Methods of encouraging and helping park visitors to know and enjoy the natural features should include information on specific locations where various natural phenomena may be seen and studied. Details of the wonders of nature and history in each park should be made available to visitors through publications for self-guided tours, and directly by trained naturalists. A system of nature trails with various species identified on them is essential, with trail-side exhibits

where convenient. Graphic displays, illustrated note sheets and pictorial panels in visitor centres as visual aids should augment this material. In campgrounds, museums and other buildings, naturalists should be equipped to give interesting nature talks illustrated by motion pictures and coloured slides.

Judicious encouragement and assistance in understanding the cycle of nature will undoubtedly enrich the experience of all park visitors. In addition, methods of mass communication should be used to acquaint Albertans generally with the purposes of parks, their uses and the benefits which may be derived from appropriate use.

- (1) Educating the public in the purposes of parks and how to use, know and enjoy them is recognized as one of our basic purposes.
- (2) Interpretative services and qualified naturalists are essential to encourage and assist the public to understand, appreciate and enjoy all forms of nature which are preserved in these sanctuaries.
- (3) Education and interpretation will involve planned and co-ordinated use of various aids, such as publications, photographs, special structures, and the assistance of wardens and others.

RECREATION

- (1) Artificial or urban type recreational developments will not be permitted in parks if their presence is not in harmony with park purposes, or causes impairment of significant natural or scenic values, or lessens the opportunity for others to enjoy the park.

- (2) Only the wholesome outdoor types of recreation which are compatible with the natural atmosphere will be permitted. This will rule out the noisy, gaudy or tawdry elements and amusements commonly associated with a midway or amusement park atmosphere.
- (3) Artificial recreations in the individual parks should not be introduced to attract visitors who would otherwise not visit the park, or as a means of increasing visitation. The main function of a park should be to provide a diversity of healthful enjoyment to meet the widely varied needs and desires of a family group who have come to the park primarily to enjoy nature and the outdoors.
- (4) Developments for specialized recreational activities in which only a small minority of visitors can participate should be judged on the basis of impairment of park values, the availability of facilities outside the park for this type of development and the importance of such developments to the province.

